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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

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TAGS: PGOV PREL UZ ZK

SUBJECT: GOU PUTS THE SQUEEZE ON STUDENTS AT EU MEETING

REF: TASHKENT 440

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY AMB. JON R. PURNELL FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

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¶1. (C) Several universities in Tashkent reportedly threatened to expel students if they attended EU informational meetings sponsored by the French Embassy. An Embassy contact told poloff numerous students missed the latest meeting out of fear that the universities would make good on the threat, which likely emanated directly from the GOU. Approximately one-third, or 20, fewer students attended than last month.

¶2. (C) After the first meeting in February (reftel), the French Embassy refused to fulfill the MFA's request to submit the list of participants. The MFA continues to ask for a list, according to our contact, and offered to supply an attendee list of approved students, which the French Embassy rejected.

¶3. (C) The GOU has also begun to restrict university teaching opportunities for foreigners. The French DCM told the DCM a French diplomat's spouse had a job offer to teach at a Tashkent university, but the offer was unexpectedly canceled at the last minute. A French Cultural Attaché is currently teaching at two international universities in Tashkent. Both universities have closely scrutinized her course curriculum.

¶4. (C) Comment: These incidents illustrate new GOU tactics in trying to isolate Uzbek students from the West, as well as interfering in their academic advancement. While the GOU cannot prevent Embassies from holding educational round tables, it does threaten students to prevent them from attending.

PURNELL